



Tajikistan School Connectivity Project

NEWS

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The Tajikistan School Connectivity Project for Central Asia has established 24 Internet Learning Centers (ILCs) in secondary schools across Tajikistan. The program's main goal is to increase global dialogue and educational opportunities by installing modern computer equipment with Internet access in schools, as well as developing training and learning projects for teachers and students.

Tajikistan School Connectivity Project activities include:

- **teacher training on using computers and the Internet in classroom teaching**
- **US school partnerships on civic education projects and teacher exchange**
- **public access and programs for community members and disadvantaged groups**
- **development of sustainable practices for schools and communities**

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Future Connectivity Students in the remote RI-SOL ILC - in a snow-covered Khorog, School #2

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International School of the Americas Recognized for Excellence in International Education

The International School of the Americas (ISA) in San Antonio, Texas, is a partner school in the School Connectivity program for its second year, and is now a winner of the 2004 Goldman Sachs Foundation Prize for Excellence in International Education. More than half of the student body is made up of minority students. The school values its diversity and teaches its students to be "global citizens". Part of the mission of ISA is to challenge students and teachers to use their education to improve themselves, their school, and the local and global communities.

Besides participating in the School Connectivity Program, ISA works towards this mission by taking part in the global community in other ways. ISA's other international projects include a week-long school trip to explore Mexican culture, as well as science partnerships with schools in Japan. ISA also participated in International Education Week with a student simulation of the United Nations, hosted by Model United Nations San Antonio (MUNSA), in which 600 students across San Antonio and Mexico participated. Another exciting upcoming project is the school's Culture Fair, in which students will research Tajikistan and share their new knowledge and culture with other students at the fair.



ISA students are encouraged to be innovative, understand the greater world, and be leaders by taking part in the local and global community.

Celebrating Thanksgiving Day in Tajikistan and Ramazan Holiday in the US

People in the USA and Tajikistan love to celebrate. Although they may have different holidays, they also have much in common - the defining characteristic of both Tajik and American holidays, is that the celebration unites people with their families and friends. This is why we focused on Thanksgiving Day in the US and Eid-i-Ramazan in Tajikistan in the holidays lesson - these are different holidays, that center around visiting families and friends. In general, this lesson was designed to introduce students to respected customs and traditions of other countries that show how even ancient holidays connect us with the universality of celebrations.

During this activity, students filled out the charts for the holiday of their partner country so they could plan a celebration of this holiday. They searched the Internet for both holidays, to find out the special traditions involved in the celebration, and also looked for the recipes of traditional food in the US and Tajikistan.

Almost all Connectivity Schools created a celebration of the holiday in their partner country—Eid-i-Ramazon in the US or Thanksgiving in Tajikistan.

Eid-I-Ramazon was celebrated on November 14th this year in Tajikistan, but for the students of Colorado Academy, the holiday fell on November 22nd. As part of the School Connectivity November Holidays activity, Colorado Academy students celebrated the Muslim holiday after learning about it through their own research and from the help of their partner schools in Tajikistan.

Students prepared food based on recipes of Tajikistani national dishes, including Palov (osh), made greeting cards to exchange at the celebration, and listened to Tajikistani music that a student found online. After feasting on the food and exchanging Eid-I-Ramazon greetings, the students shared the food and spirit of Eid-I-Ramazon with other students in the school. The students are working on a video of their holiday celebration, so they can keep and share their memories of Eid-I-Ramazon.

Tajikistani students celebrated Thanksgiving Day all week - each day at least one ILC prepared food and made decorations. In Sarband, OSE Zebo and her students dressed in the traditional costumes of the Native Americans; in Gulyakandoz students cooked a real Turkey; if you were in Istaravshan, you could try real Tajik Pumpkin Pie; in Nurek, students fried two chickens, in place of one turkey.

The students took pictures of the celebrations/presentations and sent them to their partner schools.

Please, visit our website here:

http://www.connect-tajikistan.org/en/sc_holidays.html
to find more about this activity.



Colorado Academy students getting ready for their American-style Tajikistani food for Eid-I-Ramazon.



One of the Exchange Teachers - Zebo with her students at the ILC in Sarband celebrating Thanksgiving Day



Nigora - On-site Educator from Istaravshan and one of her students showing their Pumpkin Pie - their pride and joy!



Students from Nurek preparing chickens with the help of their moms .They couldn't find any real turkeys.

Conversational Language Classes Helping Tajik English Teachers

November marked the start of an exciting new English language element being added to the connectivity program in Tajikistan. Amber Ward, a teacher of English as a foreign language, has been leading a teacher training program in the Dushanbe ILC at the School for the Deaf. These English conversation classes are for secondary school English teachers, who may have a good understanding of the grammatical rules of the language but never get any practice speaking in English. These teachers have selected their most dedicated and promising pupils to also attend the class. The goal of Amber's class is to strengthen the teachers' knowledge and ability to use English, which will be passed down to their students.

The main focus of the class is speaking and listening comprehension. By working on speaking English these teachers are forced to think and analyze in English for the first time; engaging themselves in conversations, debates and games. Amber is also introducing the ideas of computer assisted language learning (CALL) to these teachers by using computers and the Internet as tools for both teaching and learning. For some of these teachers this class is their first exposure to computers, and the possibilities the new technology present are endless. Finally Amber is exposing these teachers to new EFL methodologies, games, and activities through her upbeat and fun teaching style. By teaching through example Amber is providing these English teachers with up to date methods and materials that they can use in their own classes. Even though not listed in the syllabus, these teachers are receiving a unique chance to get to know an American teacher, fostering professional relationships and personal friendships.



Amber working with a group of students in the conversation class, School #8, Dushanbe



Introducing new methodologies and encouraging creative thinking, School #8, Dushanbe



Konibodom and Kayrokkum students at Nigina's presentation about the US

Connectivity Students Participating in International Education Week

During November 15th-24th RI-SOL participated in International Education Week for the second year. For this special event the Connectivity Project planned different activities, such as debuting the new website called 'The English Club', which was created by Amber Ward and Ibragim Rustamov. The English Club is a website designed to give English learners of different levels a fun and interactive place to practice and improve their English. It was designed with both Tajik students and teachers in mind. Please, visit: www.connect-tajikistan.org/Club

Connectivity students had a chance to participate in different forums with interesting and useful topics. The forum for Connectivity students and FLEX students in the US was the most active. We invited FLEX Students from Tajikistan studying in different states of the US to talk about their experience, so our students could have a wider idea about life and education in the US. Almost all our Internet Learning Centers participated in this forum.

Another forum – 'About Holidays in the US and Tajikistan' was also organized as part of the IEW. The FLEX Students in America and RI-SOL's Amber Ward from the USA also participated in the forums. Tajik students told the US students about their holiday, and how they had celebrated Thanksgiving Day in Tajikistan. Tajik students also shared their traditional food recipes and greetings.

Our Exchange Teachers also made their presentations during these days. Zebo, Miyasar, Dilorom, Takhmina and Nigina presented their trip to America one more time, but for a larger audience of teachers, students and government officials. The most interesting event was organized by Nigina – she took students from the Kayrakkum ILC to the Konibodom ILC – where students from both ILCs could listen to Nigina's presentation.

We think that the overall objective of IEW – to better understand the culture, life, traditions, and especially education in other countries- was achieved.

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